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Ramona Lee Etta Barnes

BIRTH	7 Jul 1938 Pikeville, Bledsoe County, Tennessee, USA
DEATH	26 Nov 2003 (aged 65) Anchorage, Anchorage Borough, Alaska, USA
BURIAL	Anchorage Memorial Park Cemetery Anchorage, Anchorage Borough, Alaska, USA
PLOT	13-2-2
MEMORIAL ID	34866777 · View Source

Anchorage Daily News November 29, 2003

Longtime Anchorage resident Ramona Lee Etta Barnes, 65, died Nov. 26, 2003, at Providence Alaska Medical Center after a long battle with several illnesses. Visitation was at Witzleben Funeral Home, 1707 S. Bragaw St. A funeral was held at Anchorage Baptist Temple, Baxter Road and Northern Lights Boulevard. Burial was at Anchorage Memorial Park Cemetery.

Ms. Barnes was born July 7, 1938, in Pikeville, Tenn. She came to Alaska in 1972 as a military wife and mother of three children. Her family wrote: "Her first involvement with Alaska politics was with the Elmendorf school system and new laws affecting the education of her children. She had a deep interest in education. During the mid-'70s, Ramona became active in Anchorage community affairs and Alaska Republican politics. She was a founder of the Anchorage Community Mental Health Center and served on the board of directors until her election to the Legislature. During this same period, she served as a trustee of the Blood Bank of Alaska and was instrumental in obtaining funding for the building. ... "She was first elected to the Alaska Legislature in 1978 and was selected as the outstanding freshman legislator of the year. Ramona served as minority whip and then in 1983 as majority leader. She was also chairwoman of the House Judiciary Committee" and championed funding for many other improvements in Alaska law enforcement throughout her career. "In 1993, Ramona was selected by her colleagues as the first female speaker of the House of Representatives. ... In 1995, Ramona served on the House Resources Committee, where she championed responsible resource development. ... "She was selected by the

Alaska Outdoor Council as outstanding legislator of the year for her steadfast support of Alaska sportsmen and women. "During her 20 years of service to the people of Alaska, Ramona received numerous awards for outstanding service. A conservative Republican, Ramona believed that as a society, we are responsible for taking care of those who cannot take care of themselves. Ramona made sure everyone she encountered was treated with fairness and dignity. When Ramona gave you her word, you could 'take it to the bank.' Her word was her bond. "She had compassion for those who called upon her with problems and fought tirelessly to protect the rights of those who were not able to fight alone. ... She played a major role in setting the direction and policy for the state of Alaska. Her accomplishments have changed the course of Alaska now and into our future. ... "She served with distinction for 20 years, longer than any other female legislator, retiring in 2000. Alaska has lost one of its best, and the void will not soon be filled."

She is survived by her daughter, Michelle Barnes of Anchorage; sons and daughters-in-law, Michael Barnes and Rae Smith Barnes of Anchorage, and Randall Barnes of Anchorage and Michelle Barnes of Cottonwood, Calif.; grandchildren, Christopher Barnes and Patrick Barnes of Anchorage, Leia Barnes of Everett, Wash., Molly Jones and Gabriel Budke of Anchorage; great-grandson, Zack Jones of Anchorage, great-granddaughter Bella Fioree; brother and sister-in-law, Leonard and Linda Wheeler of Winchester, Tenn.; sister, Zelpha Mae Morgan of Rossville, Ga.; nieces, Natalie Wheeler of Atlanta, Nicki Wheeler Hedgpath of Nashville, Tenn.; sister-in-law, Patsy Wheeler of Chattanooga, Tenn.; and niece and nephew, Holly and Scott Wheeler of Chattanooga. Her family added: "Like many people in military families, Ramona had a huge extended family of friends. Moving often as military families do, Ramona's friends became her adopted family. She will be missed by all."

Created by: Nancy K

Added: 16 Mar 2009

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